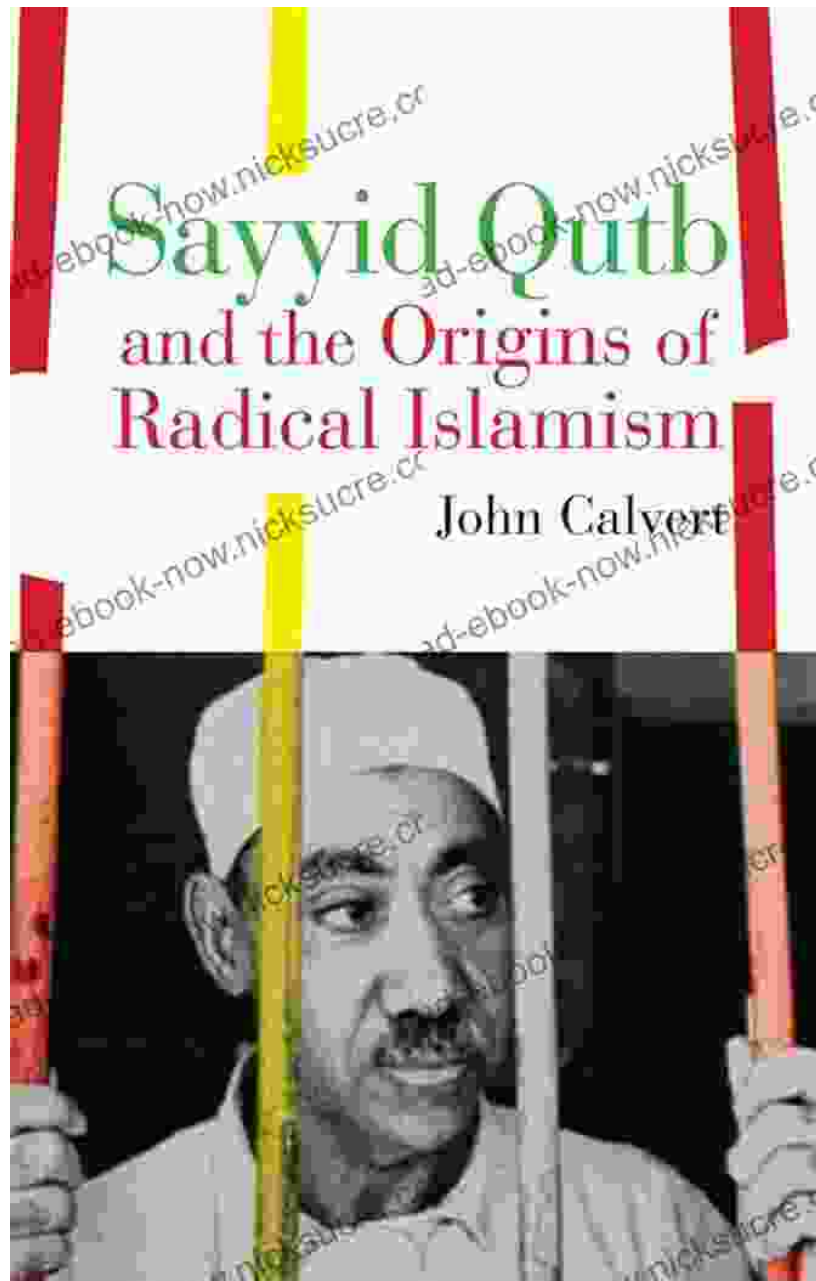
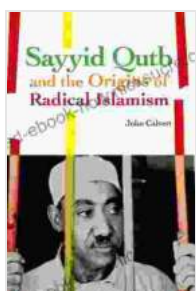


Sayyid Qutb and the Genesis of Radical Islamism: A Historical and Ideological Exploration



Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian Islamic scholar and activist, stands as a pivotal figure in the genesis of radical Islamism. Qutb's influential writings,

particularly his magnum opus "Ma'alim fi al-Tariq" (Signposts on the Road), provided a formidable ideological framework for understanding the complexities of Islam and its relationship with contemporary society. This article delves into Qutb's life, his intellectual journey, and the profound impact his ideas continue to exert on radical Islamist movements worldwide.



Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism

by John Calvert

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Print length : 390 pages

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The Early Life and Influences of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb was born in 1906 in Musha, a village in Upper Egypt. He hailed from a devout Muslim family, and his early education was infused with Quranic teachings and Islamic traditions. Qutb's intellectual curiosity led him to pursue higher education at Dar al-Ulum, a prestigious religious university in Cairo, where he excelled in his studies of Arabic literature and Islamic theology.

During his time at Dar al-Ulum, Qutb came into contact with the works of Muslim scholars such as Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Banna's emphasis on Islamic revivalism and the need for a

comprehensive Islamic society resonated with Qutb's own religious and political convictions.

Qutb's Journey to Radicalism

After graduating in 1932, Qutb embarked on a career in education and journalism. He taught in various schools and universities while contributing articles to leading Egyptian newspapers. It was during this period that Qutb's ideological beliefs took a gradual shift towards radicalism.

The assassination of al-Banna in 1949 and the ensuing suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Egyptian government had a profound impact on Qutb. He began to question the effectiveness of non-violent resistance and embraced the idea of armed struggle as a means to establish an Islamic state.

"Ma'alim fi al-Tariq": A Foundation for Radical Islamism

In 1964, while imprisoned for alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow the Egyptian government, Qutb wrote his seminal work, "Ma'alim fi al-Tariq." This book became a blueprint for radical Islamists worldwide, outlining the principles and strategies for establishing an Islamic society.

Qutb argued that the existing world order was characterized by "jahiliyya," a state of ignorance and disbelief that contradicted the true teachings of Islam. He believed that the only way to overcome this jahiliyya was through a complete transformation of society based on the principles of sharia law.

The Concept of "Hakimiyya"

Central to Qutb's ideology was the concept of "hakimiyya," or the sovereignty of God. He maintained that true sovereignty belonged to Allah

alone and that any attempt to rule by man-made laws and systems was a form of idolatry.

Qutb argued that the modern nation-state system, with its emphasis on secularism and democratic principles, was incompatible with the fundamental teachings of Islam. He believed that Muslims had a duty to reject these systems and establish an Islamic state that would implement sharia law in its entirety.

The Legacy of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb's writings and ideas have had a profound impact on radical Islamist movements worldwide. His concept of hakimiyya has become a rallying cry for groups seeking to overthrow existing governments and establish Islamic states.

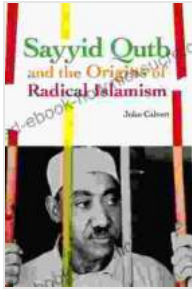
Qutb's legacy is a complex and multifaceted one. While his radical ideas have been used to justify violence and extremism, his writings have also inspired many Muslims to seek a more just and equitable society based on Islamic principles.

Sayyid Qutb remains a towering figure in the history of radical Islamism. His writings and ideas continue to shape the ideological landscape of contemporary political Islam. By understanding Qutb's life, intellectual journey, and the enduring influence of his work, we gain valuable insights into the complexities of radical Islamism and the ongoing struggle between religious and secular forces in the Muslim world.

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